



PENINSULA FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.

Mornington Peninsula, Victoria, Australia

NEWSLETTER: SEPTEMBER 2021

Birding at Bangholme Wetland 26th June

Our club's activities have been disrupted again, missing the planned Birding at Rossiter Road, Bangholme, and our June Meeting with Max Campbell from the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria; he also missed speaking to us last year. We also missed our excursion to Royal Park and Judy put out feelers for interest in an outing, once we were off the lockdown-leash. I had not checked out Royal Park due to travel restrictions and was not keen to be using public transport just now, so I suggested going to Rossiter Rd.



Photo by Heather Ducat

rumped Thornbills and Red-rumped Parrots along the road, but not today. We also had a look at the nearby turf farm and were delighted to see six Flame Robins—two males and four females—and a flock of Red-browed Finches. Keen-eyed Bette saw a White-fronted Chat. The turf farm was black with grazing swans, we counted eighty-six, but still no

Cape Barren Geese.

Still with a bit of time to spare, we drove to Patterson River for a quick look near the freeway and the Wells Rd. bridges. After the rain of recent days, the river was flowing strongly over the rocks and only a few Pacific Black Ducks, a White-faced Heron and a Silver Gull were seen. This is the usual fishing spot for Egrets and Pelicans but no sign of them. We walked a few hundred metres upstream and were rewarded with a good view of a Darter, quite close to the riverbank and also adding cormorants and a raft of coots to our list.

Seeing the Flame Robins made my day, they are delightful. Since May I've been checking on the number of Robins at Seaford Swamp and so far I've seen only three females but I no longer have access to the central track. Years ago I wondered what effect the removal of cattle from Downs Farm would have: cows = manure = insects and Robins feed on insects. Years ago up to thirty Robins would spend the winter at Seaford.—**Heather Ducat**



Photo by Bette Mitchell

had spoken to Mike Carter who said a Little Eagle and Cape Barren Geese had been seen recently; shortly after arriving we saw two Little Eagles but no geese.

The large wetland hosted only a few species - Purple Swamphen, White Ibis, a few Black Swans and lots of Masked Lapwings. On previous visits we've seen Yellow-



Photo by Bette Mitchell

Patterson River Birding 5th July

Patterson River originates at the confluence of Dandenong and Eumemmerring Creeks, north-west from Bangholme – it is an artificially constructed river created to enable the draining of Carrum Carrum Swamp. The river is only 5 kilometres long and as such the shortest in Victoria.

It all began in 1866 when Carrum Carrum Swamp, which stretched from Mordialloc to Seaford, was surveyed, divided into 18 allotments and sold at an auction. Ten years later, the settlers decided to expand and deepen Carrum Creek. The whole enterprise was named 'Patterson Cut' in honour of the then Premier of Victoria James Patterson.

Carrum Carrum Swamp was drained in 1879, and the Patterson Lakes area was turned into farmland accommodating mainly dairy cattle. In the 1960s it became a popular area for fox and rabbit hunting. The development of contemporary Patterson Lakes began in 1974, with the construction of a system of canals and lakes which flow into the Patterson River by 'Tidal Canal'.

Even though it was windy and rainy, seven of us met at Patterson Lakes. We walked along the left bank from the Wells Rd & Mornington Peninsula Freeway Bridges, upstream, towards Eumemmerring and Dandenong Creeks. We forgot about the wind and the cold when numerous Darters emerged from the reeds or from under the water, showing off only their snakey necks and the prey in their long beaks.

Rainbow Lorikeets and Red-Rumped Parrots were making noises above us, while raptors flew in the sky. There were probably 20 of them, many of which we couldn't identify more precisely than to say to each other: "Look, another raptor!" The ones we could definitively identify are the following: Black-Shouldered Kite, Little Eagle, Swamp Harrier, White-bellied Sea-eagle, Whistling Kite and Nankeen (Australian) Kestrel. We agreed that for our next birding we should bring along a copy of the silhouettes to help us with the identification of the birds of prey.



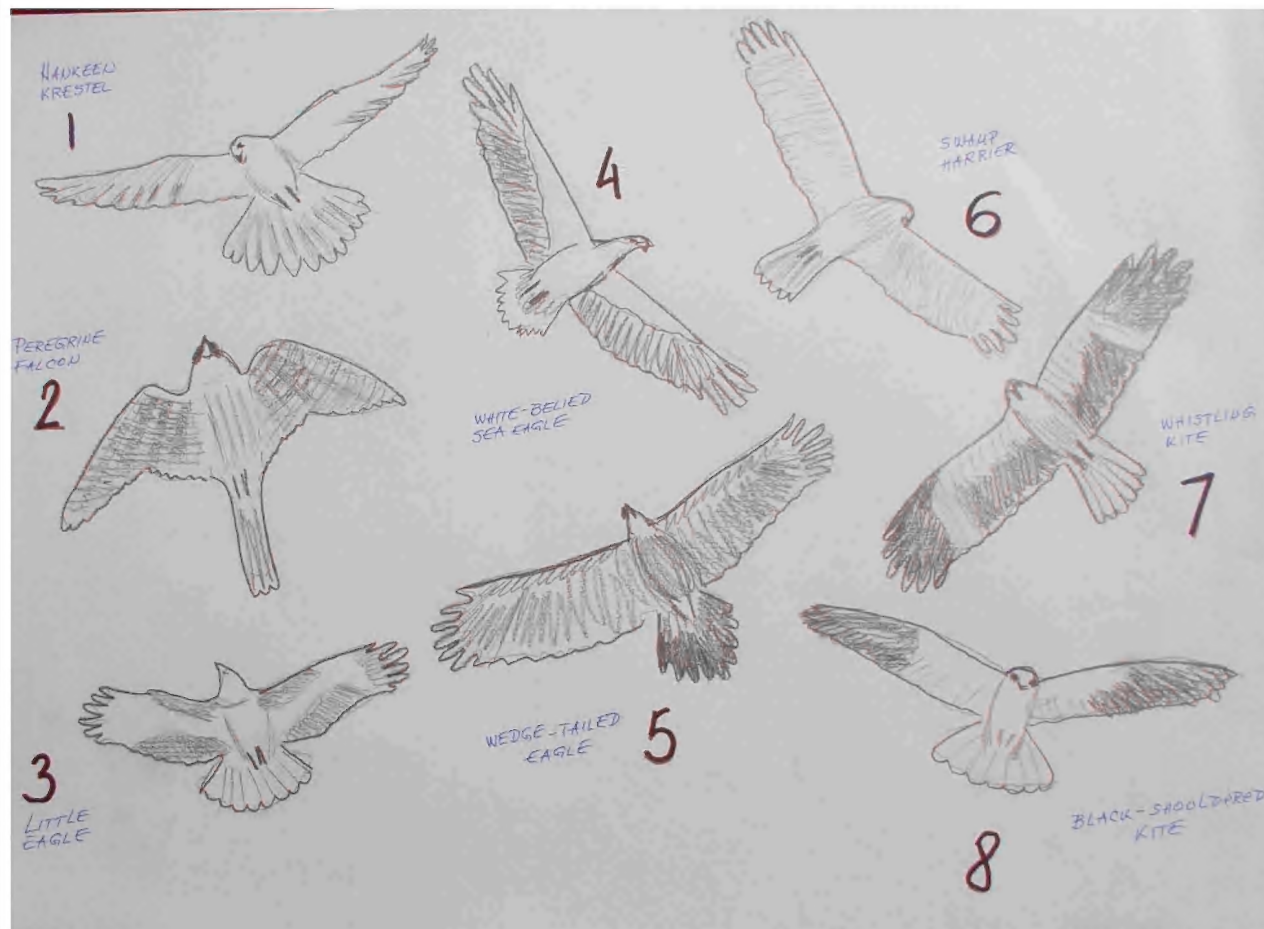
Photo by Heather Ducat

At Eumemmerring Creek, we observed a flock of Red-Browed Finches, some Honeyeaters and many other birds which are included in today's Bird List, which was compiled after lunch on the picnic grounds near Launching Way.

In the afternoon, several of us drove to the other bank. In the lagoon in front of Wannarkladdin Wetland, we observed a number of water birds, which we added to the Bird List. While the sun set in the west, the trees near the water stood adorned with Cormorants, like Christmas trees.— **Velimir Dragic**

Bird List For Patterson River 5th July 2021				
Black Swan	Australian White Ibis	Silver Gull	Brown Thornbill	Little Raven
Australian Wood Duck	Straw-necked Ibis	Spotted Turtle-Dove	Red Wattlebird	Red-browed Finch
Pacific Black Duck	Black-shouldered Kite	Crested Pigeon	Little Wattlebird	European Goldfinch
Chestnut Teal	Whistling Kite	Galah	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
Australasian Grebe	Little Eagle	Little Corella	Noisy Miner	Silveryeye
Darter	White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	White-plumed Honeyeater	Common Blackbird
Little Pied Cormorant	Swamp Harrier	Rainbow Lorikeet	New Holland Honeyeater	Common Starling
Pied Cormorant	Nankeen Kestrel	Musk Lorikeet	Grey Shrike-thrush	Common Myna
Little Black Cormorant	Purple Swamphen	Eastern Rosella	Magpie-Lark	
Australian Pelican	Dusky Moorhen	Red-rumped Parrot	Grey Fantail	
White-faced Heron	Eurasian Coot	Superb Fairy-wren	Grey Butcherbird	
Great Egret	Masked Lapwing	Spotted Pardalote	Australian Magpie	

My try to make Raptors identification easier for the next time



- 1 Nankeen Kestrel: One of smallest falcons; Light chestnut-brown with dark spots and lighter under parts; Pointed wings;
- 2 Peregrine Falcon: Larger, powerful built raptor with black hood; Black-blue upperparts and creamy-white underparts; Long and pointed wings
- 3 Little Eagle: Medium-sized raptor; Rusty broad head; Dark brown plumage and pale underneath; Underwing pale "M" pattern on black-barred wingtips; Square-cut tail
- 4 White-bellied Sea Eagle: Large raptor with large, gray hooked beaks; White underparts and dark back and wings; Long broad wings over 2m; Short wedge shaped tail
- 5 Wedge-tailed Eagle: Large raptor with pale pink bill Dark-brown plumage Long wings over 2m; Characteristic long wedge-shaped tail and totally feathered legs
- 6 Swamp Harrier: Large slim-bodied raptor; Owl-like face mask and strongly hooked bill; Dark-brown plumage and pale-cream streaked breast; Long and broad wings with 5 "fingers" in flight; Long legs and tail rounded at the tip
- 7 Whistling Kite: Medium sized raptor; Light-brown head and underparts with pale streaks Underwings have characteristic pale "M" shape
- 8 Black-shouldered Kite: Medium to small raptor; Mostly pale-grey above with a pure white head, body and tail and black shoulders; White wings with black tips; They could often be seen hovering with wings curved and tail pointing down as a kestrel

Velimir Dragic

Frankston Nature Conservation Reserve 11th July

The Club's July volunteering excursion this year took us to Frankston Nature Conservation Reserve (FNCR), which is the reserve surrounding Frankston Reservoir, and is commonly known by that name. We have previously joined the working bee in 2015 and 2016.



Photo by Quinn McCormack

The reservoir was built in 1921 to supply water to Frankston and the Peninsula. It was not a catchment, but a holding reservoir for water piped in from Kardinia Reservoir. It was taken out of service in 1970 when a tank was installed to serve this function; since then the area has been passed between authorities including Melbourne Water (who still control the area immediately surrounding the tank), Frankston City Council, and Parks Victoria. For a time it was under the control of a Friends Group; now it is back under Parks, but the Friends group continue to work on removing weeds.

The Reserve can be divided into two sections, east and west of the reservoir. The Eastern side, which rises steeply above

the water, is dominated by introduced plants, including Cedar Wattle and an array of other wattles, Radiata Pine and Sweet Pittosporum. The western side, more level, contains a vegetation community more characteristic of the indigenous heathland. More than 230 indigenous flora species have been recorded in the Reserve.



Bluebell Creeper – Photo by Lee Denis

On this occasion five Club members joined seven or eight Friends and spent a couple of hours working in the heathland, mostly removing Bluebell Creeper *Billardiera heterophylla* (also known as *Sollya heterophylla*). This seems to be the most serious invasive weed in this area, in some places completely smothering some of the indigenous plants. Among the latter in flower at the time were Common Heath (both white and pink forms); Common Correa, Hop Goodenia, Cranberry Heath and Prickly Tea-tree.

With around a dozen people we got quite a lot done for the morning, finishing with considerable piles along the track for our happy snap.—Lee Denis



Correa reflexa



Epacris impressa



Epacris impressa—Photos by Lee Denis

July Members Night 14th July

Even though it was the AGM, when usually members stay away for fear of being drafted on to the committee, we had a good turn up. Missing out on the June meeting due to lock down may have brought us all out. There was no news from the AGM—all the same committee members as last year were duly elected. We even had a new member—welcome to Georgie Rutter.

I showed my photos first—Eden before, during and after the bushfires of 2019/20. Between Christmas and New Year the sky at Eden filled with brown smoke from the bushfires near Mallacoota. Campers at Mallacoota were advised to leave, and spent a few nights camped on the oval at Eden, then all visitors were told to leave, via Cooma and Canberra, the long way home, with smoke all the way. We went back to Eden between Christmas and New Year again 2020/21, and walked up Mt Imlay, which overlooks Eden.



Photo by Judy Smart

The town itself and surrounds were not burnt, but the highway and surrounding bush were. The eucalypts on Mt Imlay were sprouting epicormic growth, and the new growth was being grazed by beetles and sawfly larva.

There were plenty of pioneer plants revitalising the landscape, especially *Acacia cognata*, *Bursaria spinosa*, *Goodia lotifolia* and Kangaroo Apples (*Solanum* sp.). One intriguing plant was *Passiflora cinnabarina*, with spectacular red flowers. I had not seen it there before. There were a few Hyacinth orchids too, and a flying duck orchid. We didn't see or hear any birds though.

Heather showed us photos of Patterson River after a summer storm in February 2011, with water just below the freeway bridge, quite astonishing. These complemented our birding excursion there earlier in the month, when the river was running strongly, but nothing like this.



Photo by Heather Ducat

Heather has an article in our June newsletter, about the SEANA camp at Hamilton, and the volcanics there. She showed us photos from the camp excursions of Mt Napier, the Harman Valley lava flow, the Byaduk lava caves, and the tumuli nearby (lava blisters). Also Mt Rouse scoria quarry, with its three layers: the top orange soil, then basalt, then scoria at base. It was good to see the photos on the big screen, with more detail than can be shown in a newsletter. She brought along bombs from Mt Shadwell too.—**Judy Smart**



Mt. Napier (left); Scoria Quarry Mt. Rouse. (right) Photos by Heather Ducat

President's Report. - PFNC AGM 14th July 2021

Welcome all.

This will be a short meeting leaving plenty of time for member's observations and photos. Something we have done a bit of lately, providing a good opportunity to thank Heather especially for her input.

Our Calendar 20/21.

Outings and meetings have been rescheduled many times this year and we must thank Judy for confidently soldering on with reprogramming.

Communication with members has been electronic (supplemented with a few phone calls and random encounters in the street). I urge everyone to get on board with technology. It is really the only way to now "keep up" with fast changes in all aspects of our lives. You can do it!

Our excellent Newsletter and the website are due to Lee Denis. Thanks for putting together a very special record of our adventures in the wild. Those of us who could possibly join in more often are really missing out on unique opportunities.

Peninsula Field Nats. - Facebook

Up to 50 people view our posts. Nature observations from

near and far also some local environmental advocacy. Thanks to contributors and especially Tanya Hattingh for administering the post. Member's feedback would be most welcome.

SEANA. Pat Gomm is our representative on this group. Please consider joining in the 6 monthly camp experience. Soon we will be hosting 100 visitors on the Peninsula! (We will need help).

FEFN. As a member group of Frankston Environmental Friends Network we benefit and are able to contribute locally in many ways.

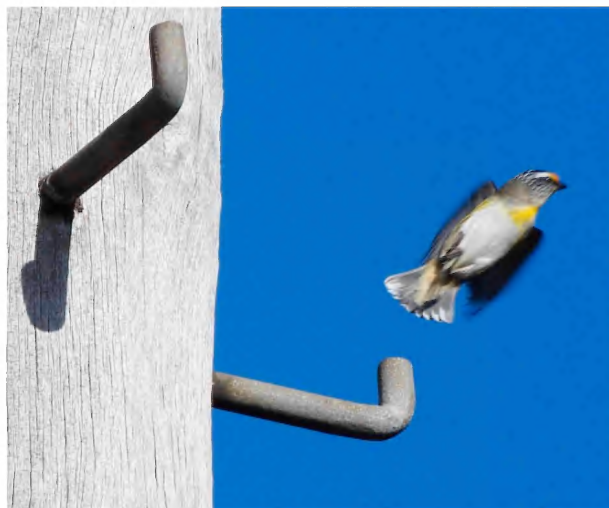
PFNC SUBS keep us going and also support some other like minded bodies. Linda Edwards keeps us on track financially. Thanks.

Annually in July we rally for a working/bee at a Reserve in our area. This year we were able to contribute at the FNCR (aka Frankston Reservoir) It was a beautiful morning followed by a walk.

Thanks to all members and especially our small committee.
—**Coralie Davies**

Birding at Bulldog Creek Road & Devilbend 2nd August

Numbers were down for this excursion, with only four starters at Bulldog Creek Road, shrinking to two at Devilbend. Some members had taken the opportunity between lockdowns to do other things they had been longing to do, such as visit family. The latest lockdown was imposed the next day, and continues at time of writing, so this was our most recent group excursion.



Striated Pardalote takes flight

The sky was clear but the wind was very cold at the top of Bulldog Creek Road. Our observations got off to a great

start with three Striated Pardalotes on the power pole above us as we parked. These three persisted on the cross-beam for as long as we were there, making us wonder if they had found a potential nesting hole in the structure.

The wind was less oppressive as we walked down the hill, and we soon started seeing more birds, including a flock of White-naped Honeyeaters, also New Holland Honeyeaters, and Eastern Spinebills. As is usual, we would encounter pockets of abundant birdlife separated by long stretches with no apparent birds at all. At one point we started naming the birds we wanted to see: Heather nominated Mistletoebird, and lo and behold one duly appeared. We tried the technique with several other species but were unsuccessful. Perhaps the first one was a fluke.

Nevertheless the final total of 31 was considered quite satisfactory, and included some other favourites including Spotted Pardalote, Eastern and Crimson Rosellas, Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo. More common birds included Grey Fantail, Rainbow Lorikeet, Grey Butcherbird and Welcome Swallow. A Wedge-tailed Eagle was spotted high above.

The paddocks at the bend where the road dips down to the Creek were empty, not only no birds but no cattle. It took us quite a while to see our first Magpie; eventually a pair of Galahs showed themselves.



Sulphur-crested Cockatoo looking for a nest hollow

Photos by Lee Denis

A side benefit of this location is that there are often orchids along the road verge. On this occasion we saw only Tall and Nodding Greenhoods.

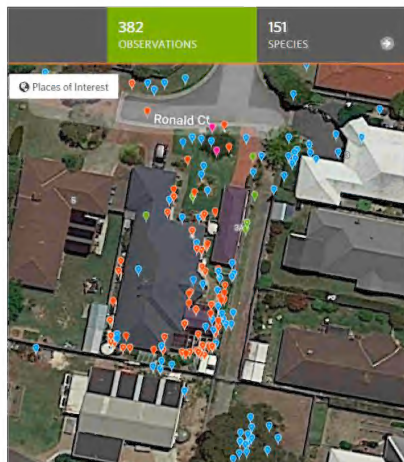
After lunch at Devilbend picnic area two of us decided that 'as long as we're here we might as well have a look.' Our bird count ended up the same as at Bulldog Creek Road, with 16 of them new for the day. We started with a large flock of Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoos over the car park, and several bush birds we had already seen, plus Grey Currawong. Almost all of the new sightings for the day were waterbirds.

Surprisingly they did not include Little Pied Cormorant; Great and Little Black were the only representatives of the Cormorant fraternity. Swans, Coots and Pelicans were to be expected; Yellow-billed Spoonbill, and Caspian and Whiskered Tern were bonuses. We watched the latter cruising across the water, then diving in. Also cruising across the water was a White-bellied Sea-eagle. There was another raptor but the distance and brevity of its appearance defeated our efforts at identification.

Birds numbers seem to have declined dramatically at Devilbend, but there was probably a lot of alternative waterbird habitat around.—**Lee Denis**

Lockdown Benefit - 4 Ronald Court Somerville

A benefit of Lockdown has been the ability to increase the records of the biodiversity at home. I have always been recording the number of species that exist around the property, which is a larger house on a residential block with a predominately exotic species garden. The balance is slowly changing with the indigenous planting of new species and the planting of a small Council owned drainage easement along my side fence.



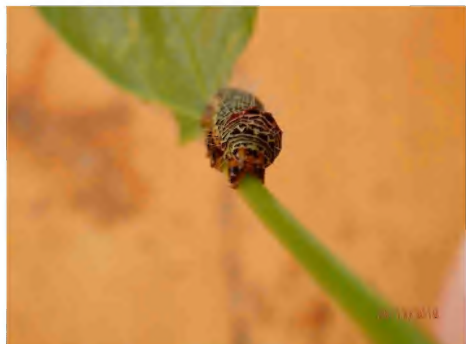
All observations have been logged onto iNaturalist which has been a benefit both in showing the records on an aerial photograph but also adding to the biodiversity records of the Mornington Peninsula Shire Biodiversity Group.

As of August 2021 the iNaturalist records are as follows:

382 Observations and 151 Species with a rough break-up of the species as follows:

- 47 species of Butterflies and Moths
- 18 species of Bird
- 12 species of Spider
- 12 species of flies (order Diptera)
- 5 species of ant
- 4 species of Snails and slugs
- 4 species of Ladybirds
- 48 Invertebrates of varying species

— **Graeme Rigg**



Left: Australian Grapevine Moth *Phalaenoides glycinae*

Right: *Eriophora biapicata* a member of Typical orbweavers

Photos by Graeme Rigg



14 Years of Bird Observing at Langwarrin Flora & Fauna Reserve

Since moving to live in Frankston in December 2007 I have made the Langwarrin Flora and Fauna Reserve a regular haunt for observing birds, flowering plants (especially orchids), fungi, and, occasionally, insects. I have been in the habit of keeping lists of my observations and with time on my hands recently I decided to collate all of my bird lists over the past 14 years (13 years in spring since at time of writing spring has not yet sprung this year). I found some of the results surprising.

I stress that I am not claiming a systematic bird survey; my visits have been random, as have the locations visited—often motivated by looking for orchids rather than birds, so birds in the same places as the orchids were more likely to be observed. By observed I mean seen or heard, or both. I have collated the records by month—I did not visit the Reserve every month of every year; over the 13 or 14 year period I found lists ranging from 8 years for January to 13 years for September and October (peak time for orchid flowering). I have not counted the number of lists for a given month; especially in spring and summer (and during lockdown, when I couldn't go anywhere else) I have quite often made weekly visits, so this will also bias the numbers in these months.



Powerful Owls. All Photos by Lee Denis

For those not familiar with the Reserve, it comprises about 214 hectares of bush on sand dunes; vegetation includes heath, eucalypt woodland, and some low-lying areas that support swamp paperbark and even tree ferns. It was used by the military from late 19th century until the 1970s, and was declared a reserve in 1981. How much of it is remnant and how much regrowth is difficult to say. It also contains an area of exotic plantations.

It is bounded on the west by the Stony Point line rail reserve and Peninsula Link freeway, and further on by schoolgrounds and another reserve; on the north by housing, much of it with little vegetation cover, although a few hundred metres further north is Cruden Farm, the former home of Dame Elizabeth Murdoch, which has areas of bush and paddocks; on the east by private properties with lots of bushland; and to the south mostly by open paddocks. The Reserve is thus far from an island of bushland surrounded by houses, with birds moving freely to and fro.

There are wide firebreaks all around, often with large areas of surface water in winter and spring, a wide central road from west to east, and a small reservoir that usually holds water, but has completely dried up at times. It is a popular destination for walkers and cyclists, and in the last two years has been especially popular.

The lists are, with some reservations, records of presence; absence from the lists does not of course mean absence from the Reserve. I am aware of several reports of birds that I have not personally seen there—Crested Shrike-tit and Pink Robin come to mind—and I heard many reports of Powerful Owl before I saw one there. The absence of a bird from my lists could be because:

- it's never there
- it wasn't there when I was
- it was there, but I didn't see it
- I saw it, but couldn't identify it
- I identified it, but didn't write a list
- I wrote a list, but haven't found the list

My lists only refer to presence; I have not done species counts.

My total of species observed over the period is 83; this includes birds seen in the air which may or may not actually be using the Reserve: White and Straw-necked Ibis, Pelican, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, and Little Corella. Raptors such as Wedge-tailed Eagle and Swamp Harrier, seen only in the air, could be said to be using the Reserve if they were hunting over it.

Observations by month over the period range from 32 species in June to 61 in November. Fig 1 shows the variation in number of years with at least one visit for each month and cumulative number of birds observed in each month, and illustrates the boost in numbers in Spring.

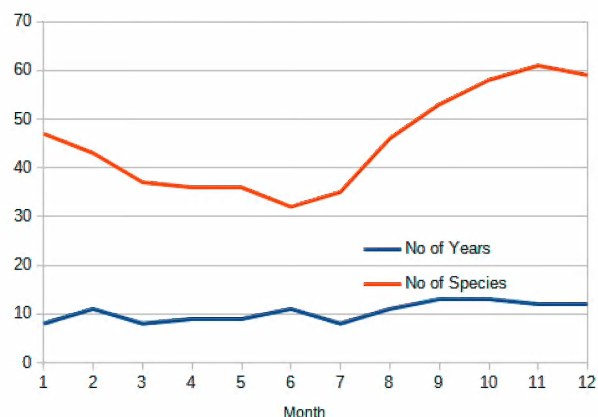


Fig 1. Variation in species numbers by month

I have divided my observations into four groups: the Steady Regulars, the Seasonal Regulars, the Irregulars, and the Rarities. These categories are descriptive of my observations, not necessarily of the habits of the birds; I do not believe that my data are systematic enough to use

categories such as ‘resident’—there may well be species that are usually or always there but not often observed by me, while some that I have often observed may be moving in and out of the Reserve.

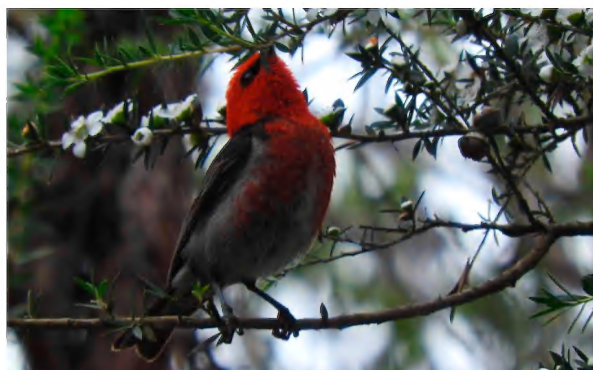
The Rarities

I will deal with the last group first, because they are the source of the reservations I mentioned above. Where I have only one record for the whole period there is always the possibility of misidentification. Table 1 includes the birds for which I have only one record over the period in question—14 species. Whilst I can recall having seen most of them, and even have photographs to prove it, five of them are a little more doubtful in my mind, since I can’t recall seeing them—these are Brown Falcon, Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, White-throated Treecreeper, Striated Thornbill and Restless Flycatcher. The other 9 single-observations in Table 1 have definitely been in the Reserve, and for the sake of classification I include under ‘Rarities’ another six species for which I have very few records.

Table 1. The Rarities

*Chestnut Teal	Little Corella	*Scarlet Robin
*Great Egret	Pallid Cuckoo	*Flame Robin
Black-shouldered Kite	*Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	Satin Flycatcher
*Swamp Harrier	Powerful Owl	*Restless Flycatcher
Little Eagle	Sacred Kingfisher	*Rufous Fantail
*Brown Falcon	*White-throated Treecreeper	*White-winged Triller
Silver Gull	*Striated Thornbill	Australian Raven
*Crested Pigeon	Scarlet Honeyeater	*Common Starling
* Birds recorded only once in the period		

Some of the birds in Table 1 could be described as ‘seasonal rarities’—only seen in summer were Pallid Cuckoo, Sacred Kingfisher, Scarlet Honeyeaters—which, as many will know, were spotted all over the Peninsula in the summers of 2017-18 and 2020-21—and Satin Flycatchers, a breeding pair seen for several successive summers. My observations of Powerful Owl have been few, but it is probably more often present, if not resident. With day-roosting species like owls and frogmouths, once you spot a daytime roost you are able to see the bird there reliably for as long as it uses that roost. Once it moves to a new spot you have to find it again.



Scarlet Honeyeater

Steady Regulars

There was a total of 18 species that I recorded in every calendar month, and in every year of the period, as shown in Table 2. To these I add a further 8 species which I have observed in all but one or two calendar months, and in most (12 or more) years.

Table 2. The Steady Regulars

Collared Sparrowhawk	*Brown Thornbill	*Grey Shrike-thrush
*Common Bronzewing	*Red Wattlebird	*Grey Fantail
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	*Yellow-faced Honeyeater	*Grey Butcherbird
*Rainbow Lorikeet	*White-eared Honeyeater	*Australian Magpie
Tawny Frogmouth	*White-naped Honeyeater	Grey Currawong
Laughing Kookaburra	*New Holland Honeyeater	Little Raven
*Superb Fairy-wren	Eastern Spinebill	Mistletoebird
*Spotted Pardalote	*Eastern Yellow Robin	Welcome Swallow
*White-browed Scrubwren	*Golden Whistler	*Common Blackbird
* observed every year, and in every calendar month		

My lists show that, despite their common status, there were many visits with 20 or more birds observed that did not include one or more of these—no Grey Fantail, for example, observed that day, or no New Holland Honeyeater, and so on. These birds were somewhere other than where I was!



Collared Sparrowhawk (ready to swoop on me again)

Seasonal Regulars

I have placed 13 birds in this category; they have been recorded in all or most of the years in question, but with a total lack of records in the middle of the year; this lack stretches for different birds in the period from late summer through autumn and into the winter months. They are listed in Table 3.

Of the list in Table 3, obviously the two Ibis species have been recorded overhead and most likely do not use the Reserve, although it is interesting that I have no records of White Ibis on the wing in late summer into autumn, while Straw-necked Ibis have not been recorded in winter.

Table 3. The Seasonal Regulars

Australian Wood Duck	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Pacific Black Duck	Little Wattlebird	Dusky Woodswallow
Australian White Ibis	Rufous Whistler	Red-browed Finch
Straw-necked Ibis	Magpie-lark	Common Myna
Spotted Dove		

Of the list in Table 3, obviously the two Ibis species have been recorded overhead and most likely do not use the Reserve, although it is interesting that I have no records of White Ibis on the wing in late summer into autumn, while Straw-necked Ibis have not been recorded in winter. There are known migratory birds like the Cuckoos, Rufous Whistler, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, and Dusky Woodswallow, while the rest are certainly around the general area all year but only seem to use the Reserve in Spring and Summer.

*Olive-backed Oriole*

Both Wood Duck and Black Duck can be seen most of the year in open spaces in parks and gardens, and in the paddocks surrounding the Reserve, but move into the Reserve to breed and were observed there in the period between July and December. Magpie-lark and Common Myna were also not recorded in the winter months, but whether they are moving into the Reserve to breed, or just due to the dispersal after breeding, I couldn't say. Certainly I have never seen evidence of them breeding there, unlike the ducks: the litter of large eggshells under a tree hollow is a common sight in Spring, indicating a Wood Duck nesting site, while Black Ducks with ducklings are sometimes seen on the water bodies.

Little Wattlebird was not recorded in mid-winter, but was sporadically seen most of the other months, and might use the Reserve more infrequently.

The surprise to me in Table 3 is Red-browed Finch, which I have recorded almost every year, but with no records at all for five months from March to July. They are certainly around the area, often noted in large flocks at Seaford Wetland and the Eastern Treatment Plant among other places. I surmise that they flock together in these more open places in the winter months before dispersing in spring to

the thicker bush. It would be interesting to learn if they disperse only as far as the surrounding paddocks, gardens and lawns at this time—there seems to be plenty of potential habitat close by, beyond the boundaries of the Reserve

The Irregulars

I have called the remaining group 'irregulars' with reference to my observations; these are birds for which I have observations over a number of years, but with long gaps in between, and in several different calendar months, sometimes but not always showing a seasonal pattern.

*White-necked Heron in the reservoir*

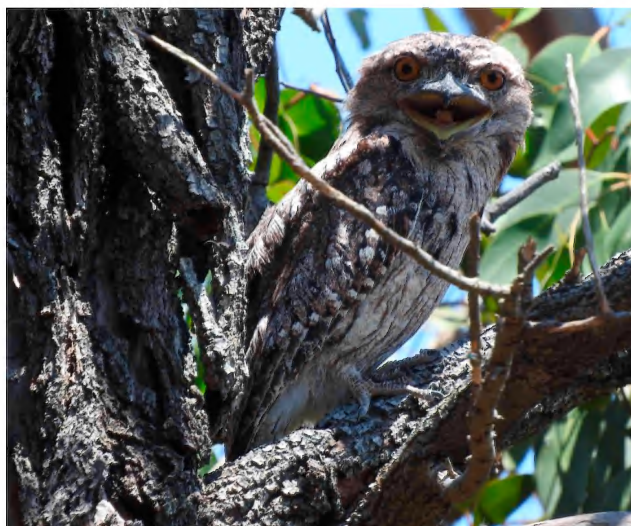
Those which could be classified 'seasonal irregulars' were predominantly observed in spring and summer, as shown in Table 4. Again, Pelicans would have been observed overhead, while some others in Table 4 could be more common, or even resident, but less likely to be observed.

Table 4. The Irregulars

Australian Pelican	Eastern Rosella	Willie Wagtail
*White-faced Heron	*Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	*Olive-backed Oriole
White-necked Heron	*Striated Pardalote	Pied Currawong
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Noisy Miner	*European Goldfinch
*Brush Bronzewing	*White-plumed Honeyeater	*Silvereye
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Brown-headed Honeyeater	*Bassian Thrush
Galah	* mostly observed in summer	

Bassian Thrush was not observed between March and July, but was not often observed at other times, so it is possible

that it is more common than it would seem. Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos are very obvious when calling, or in a flock on the wing, but are not infrequently encountered quietly ripping into the Sallow Wattles in search of larvae—you will see a lot of Sallows of up to 10-15 centimetres diameter that have broken at the point thus weakened. Noisy Miners are rarely seen away from the boundaries abutting backyards, while Eastern Rosellas are more common there, so their irregularity of observation might be due to the infrequency of my visits to those locations.



Tawny Frogmouth

I have found it to be quite an interesting exercise to collate and analyse all of my bird lists for Langwarrin FFR. Undoubtedly there will be other observers who have seen

more—perhaps others will be able to back up some of my doubtful identifications!—but I think it likely that I have observed all of the regular users of the Reserve, both resident and seasonal, which is the most important aspect ecologically. What I would like to find out now is how the diversity of species compares with similar sized areas of bush around the Peninsula or around southern Victoria.

As is usually the case, it shows up aspects that I wish I had paid more attention to, and will do in future. For example, in an armchair recollection I could think of 16 species for which I have observed direct evidence of breeding in the Reserve—the true number must be several times that. Also, I have not recorded what section of the Reserve I visited for each list. The Reserve is not particularly large, but is still a lot of ground to cover in one visit.



Magpie enjoying a sand-bath

It occurs to me that many people probably have kept bird lists both for the Reserve and for the surrounding area. It would be an interesting citizen science exercise to collate these available lists to see to what extent the birds use the general area, and which birds if any are pretty much dependent on the Reserve.—**Lee Denis**

Peninsula Field Naturalists Club Inc

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month with a field trip the following Saturday. Further information and current Programme of Activities can be found at our website.

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